

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 FEA-01 INT-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01

SAJ-01 EA-06 /087 W

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R 120900Z APR 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1887

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 415

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, FR

SUBJECT: REASSIGNMENT OF FRENCH AMBASSADOR

1. FRENCH AMBASSADOR PIERRE CERLES IS DEPARTING MAY 1 AFTER FIVE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL YEARS IN BAGHDAD. HE IS SCHEDULED TO REPLACE DE COMMINES AS CHIEF OF NORTH AFRICAN AND NEAR EAST DEPT IN QAI. HE TOLD ME HE WAS OFFERED BELGRADE BUT TURNED IT DOWN AS LACKING CHALLENGE.

2. CERLES IS HIGHLY REGARDED BY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES FOR HIS DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLECT. HE WAS VERY CAUTIOUS WITH WHOM HE SHARED INFORMATION, ALWAYS FEARING THAT HE WOULD BE QUOTED AND IT WOULD GET BACK TO IRAQI AUTHORITIES AND UNDERCUT HIS MISSION. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF SEVERAL ARAB AMBASSADORS WHO ENJOYED QUOTING HIM. ON MANY OCCASIONS HE FAILED TO INFORM HIS EEC COLLEAGUES OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN ADVANCE, MOST RECENTLY ABOUT SADDAM HUSSEIN'S ONE DAY TRIP TO PARIS ENROUTE TO THE OPEC SUMMIT. THIS EARNED HIM CONSIDERABLE RESENTMENT, BUT WELL ILLUSTRATES ESSENTIALLY LONE WOLF ROLE FRANCE HAS PLAYED HERE  
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TO CASH IN ON ITS SPECIAL POSITION. IT HAS GRABBED AS

MANY ECONOMIC PROJECTS AS IT COULD WITH NO COORDINATION WITH EEC COUNTRIES AND SOMETIMES AT THEIR EXPENSE. ITALIANS IN PARTICULAR HAVE RESENTED FRENCH AGGRESSIVE SELF-INTERESTEDNESS. FRENCH POLICY BECAME NOTABLY MORE AGGRESSIVE IN WAKE OF OIL CRISIS. CERLES HIMSELF RARELY GOT INVOLVED IN DETAILS OF ECONOMIC PROJECTS.

3. ALL OF CERLES PREVIOUS POSTS (MOSCOW, PEKING, NATO) HAVE GIVEN HIM WORLD VIEW OF DIPLOMACY AND BAGHDAD WAS FIRST POST IN WHICH HE CONCENTRATED ON ONE COUNTRY. IT WAS ALSO HIS FIRST POST IN MIDDLE EAST. HE THINKS IN GLOBAL CONCEPTS IN WHICH STRONG WESTERN WORLD IS A NECESSITY. THERE IS NO DOUBT HOWEVER, THAT SINCE CHIRAC VISIT IN DECEMBER HE BECAME NOTICEABLY MORE MILITANTLY FRENCH ORIENTED.

4. CERLES IS BACHELOR. THERE ARE RUMORS OF A SHORT UNHAPPY MARRIAGE DURING HIS TOUR IN PEKING. HIS WORK IS HIS LIFE AND HE APPEARS TO BE INTERESTED IN LITTLE ELSE. NO MATTER WHAT THE OCCASION, HE TENDS TO CORNER SOMEONE FOR AN EXCHANGE OF CONFIDENCES. HE WAS PARTLY EDUCATED IN ENGLAND AND SEEMS TO HAVE UNCHARACTERISTIC LIKING FOR BRITISH AND AMERICAN DIPLOMATS. THIS, PLUS HIS WORLD VIEW, SUGGESTS THAT HE WOULD RESPOND WELL TO SPECIAL ATTENTION FROM AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN PARIS AND WASHINGTON IN HIS NEW POSITION.

LOWRIE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS, AMBASSADORS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 12 APR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975BAGHDA00415  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750129-0562  
**From:** BAGHDAD  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750455/aaaabywo.tel  
**Line Count:** 88  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 15 MAY 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <15 MAY 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <19 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** REASSIGNMENT OF FRENCH AMBASSADOR  
**TAGS:** PFOR, IZ, FR, (CERLES, PIERRE)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006